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ABSTRACT

Enrollment trends at North Carolina's private higher education institutions during 1978-1982 were examined. The total full-time-equivalent enrollment for all private institutions in the state increased from 48,446 in 1978 to 49,808 in 1982. Based on the Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher Education, it was found that each classification of private university and college exhibited enrollment growth during the 5-year period, except for Comprehensive Universities and Colleges II, which experienced enrollment declines. The largest enrollment increase was for the Comprehensive Universities and Colleges I classification. Most private North Carolina institutions are classified as Liberal Arts Colleges II, a group that showed diverse enrollment trends. Enrollment data for individual institutions are included. (SW)

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# ENROLLMENT TRENDS IN NORTH CAROLINA PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION

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A significant indicator of the relative health of an institution of higher education is its ability to attract and enroll students. The Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education asserted in its final report:

> We give special attention in this report to enrollments, not for their own sake or for the sake of survival of institutions or some of their component parts, per se, or out of pity for the plight of an overexpanded industry. We are concerned, rather, that in a largely enrollment-driven system of higher education decreasing enrollments can potentially have unfortunate impacts on academic excellence, on accumulation of scientific knowledge, on future capacity to interpret the past culture and the current human predicament, on the tone and spirit of an essential segment of American society, on the survival of private initiative and institutional autonomy.[1]

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This study will examine the enrollment trends of North Carolina's private institutions of higher education over the past five years, fall of 1978 to fall of 1982.

The characteristics and qualities of institutions of higher education vary considerably. In recognition of these distinctions, a classification system devised by the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education[2] (Attachment A) is used nationally and in this study. North Carolina's private institutions of higher education may be classified into six of the Carnegie classifications: Research Universities I; Comprehensive Universities and Colleges I and II; Liberal Arts Colleges I and II; and Two Year Colleges.

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[1]Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education, Three Thousand Futures: The Next Twenty Years for Higher Education (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1980), pp. 6-7.

[2]Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education, A Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. Revised Edition (Berkeley, Calif.: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1976).

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Each classification of private universities and colleges (Table 1) exhibited enrollment growth over the five year period except for Comprehensive Universities and Colleges II. In this classification each institution has experienced declines in enrollment since 1978. The average full-time equivalent enrollment decline for this group was 11 percent with a low of three percent for Guilford College and a high of 19 percent for Johnson C. Smith University. Johnson C. Smith University and Mars Hill College seem to be experiencing the most difficulty in sustaining their student population in this particular classification.

The largest increase in enrollment was for the Comprehensive Universities and Colleges I classification with an 11 percent increase. Campbell University exhibited a whopping 24 percent in enrollment increase which is due in at least part by their new school of law. Elon College also had a healthy increase of 13 percent. Wake Forest University along with the other two prestigious private North Carolina institutions, Duke University (Research Universities I) and Davidson College (Liberal Arts Colleges I) displayed a stable enrollment growth picture over the five year period with slight increases.

Most private institutions in North Carolina fall into the Liberal Arts Colleges II classification. The enrollment picture for this group is quiet diverse ranging from a full-time equivalent enrollment increase of 80 percent for Queens College to a decline of 32 percent for Livingstone College. Several institutions in this classification, Belmont Abbey College, Gardner-Webb College, High Point College, Queens College, Sacred Heart College, St. Andrews College, and Shaw University, have experienced healthy enrollment growth since 1978. Others on the other hand, Barber-Scotia College, Bennett College, Greensboro

College, Livingstone College, Methodist College, and Pfeiffer College, appear to be in serious trouble unless they can reverse their declining enrollment trends.

The two year colleges appear to be holding their own with a one percent enrollment increase for the classification. Brevard College is the healthiest with a 10 percent increase and Peace College exhibited the largest enrollment decline of the classification with 11 percent.

The total full-time equivalent enrollment for all private institutions of higher education in North Carolina increased from 48,446 in the fall of 1978 to 49,808 in the fall of 1982 or a three percent increase.

A ten year look at the private college and university enrollment trends (Table 2) reveals a picture similiar to that described previously except for a few exceptions. The three flagship institutions, Duke University, Wake Forest University, and Davidson College, have prospered throughout the decade. In the Comprehensive Universities and Colleges I classification the ten year trends confirm the growing enrollment position of Campbell University and Elon College. With the exception of Atlantic Christian College, the enrollment problems for the Comprehensive Universities and Colleges II appear to have manifested themselves in the late 1970's.

Gardner-Webb College, Meredith College, Queens College, Shaw University, and Warren Wilson College appear to be in a healthy position in the Liberal Arts Colleges II classification when viewed from the ten year perspective. As noted earlier from the five year FTE data, the ten year headcount data confirms the enrollment problems of Barber-Scotia College and Livingstone College.

Table 1

FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT ENROLLMENT IN NORTH CAROLINA PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES BY TYPE FROM FALL 1978 TO FALL 1982

| | FALL 1978 | FALL 1982 | PERCENTAGE CHANGE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Research Universities I | | | |
| Duke | 9,528 | 9,652 | 1 |
| Comprehensive Universities and Colleges I | | | |
| Campbell | 2,035 | 2,523 | 24 |
| Elon | 2,178 | 2,457 | 13 |
| Wake Forest | 4,523 | 4,676 | 3 |
| Subtotal | 8,736 | 9,656 | 11 |
| Comprehensive Universities and Colleges II | | | |
| Atlantic Christian | 1,512 | 1,425 | - 6 |
| Guilford | 1,474 | 1,423 | - 3 |
| Johnson C. Smith | 1,455 | 1,172 | -19 |
| Mars Hill | 1,647 | 1,382 | -16 |
| St. Augustine's | 1,733 | 1,547 | -11 |
| Subtotal | 7,821 | 6,949 | -11 |
| Liberal Arts Colleges I | | | |
| Davidson | 1,348 | 1,400 | 1 |
| Salem | 593 | 557 | - 6 |
| Subtotal | 1,941 | 1,957 | 1 |
| Liberal Arts Colleges II | | | |
| Barber-Scotia | 399 | 371 | - 7 |
| Belmont Abbey | 672 | 783 | 17 |
| Bennett | 617 | 532 | -14 |
| Catawba | 938 | 925 | - 1 |
| Gardner-Webb | 1,275 | 1,662 | 30 |
| Greensboro | 655 | 557 | -15 |
| High Point | 1,037 | 1,279 | 23 |
| Lenoir Rhyne | 1,223 | 1,272 | 4 |
| Livingstone | 867 | 593 | -32 |
| Meredith | 1,402 | 1,477 | 5 |
| Methodist | 845 | 681 | -19 |
| N.C. Wesleyan | 595 | 589 | - 1 |
| Pfeiffer | 884 | 722 | -18 |
| Queens | 416 | 747 | 80 |
| Sacred Heart | 263 | 367 | 40 |
| St. Andrews | 583 | 691 | 19 |
| Shaw | 1,240 | 1,721 | 39 |
| Warren Wilson | 524 | 534 | 2 |
| Wingate | 1,345 | 1,419 | 6 |
| Subtotal | 15,780 | 16,922 | 7 |
| Two Year Colleges | | | |
| Brevard | 648 | 714 | 10 |
| Chowan | 1,050 | 1,078 | 3 |
| Lees-McRae | 727 | 706 | - 3 |
| Louisburg | 670 | 695 | 4 |
| Montreat-Anderson | 418 | 383 | - 8 |
| Mount Olive | 321 | 330 | 3 |
| Peace | 506 | 448 | -11 |
| St. Mary's | 300 | 318 | 6 |
| Subtotal | 4,640 | 4,672 | 1 |
| Total | 48,446 | 49,808 | 3 |

Sources: Statistical Abstract of Higher Education in North Carolina, 1978-79 and 1982-83.

Table 2

HEADCOUNT ENROLLMENT TRENDS FOR NORTH CAROLINA'S PRIVATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, 1972-82

| | Percentage Change 1972-Peak Year | Peak Year 1972-82 | Percentage Change Peak Year-1982 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Duke University | 11 | 1982 | - |
| Campbell University | 31 | 1982 | - |
| Elon College | 40 | 1982 | - |
| Wake Forest University | 20 | 1981 | - 1 |
| Atlantic Christian College | - | 1972 | -13 |
| Guilford College | 8 | 1978 | - 7 |
| Johnson C. Smith University | 53 | 1976 | -25 |
| Mars Hill College | 30 | 1979 | -22 |
| St. Augustine's College | 23 | 1977 | -11 |
| Davidson College | 26 | 1981 | - 1 |
| Salem College | 9 | 1981 | - 7 |
| Barber-Scotia College | 4 | 1976 | -29 |
| Belmont Abbey College | 51 | 1980 | - 6 |
| Bennett College | 14 | 1979 | -13 |
| Catawba College | - | 1972 | -15 |
| Gardner-Webb College | 13 | 1982 | - |
| Greensboro College | 11 | 1978 | -15 |
| High Point College | 33 | 1980 | - 6 |
| Lenoir Rhyne College | 5 | 1981 | - 3 |
| Livingstone College | 33 | 1977 | -38 |
| Meredith College | 23 | 1982 | - |
| Methodist College | 48 | 1978 | -20 |
| NC Wesleyan College | 28 | 1981 | - 9 |
| Pfeiffer College | - | 1972 | -26 |
| Queens College | 86 | 1982 | - |
| Sacred Heart College | 111 | 1979 | -20 |
| St. Andrews College | - | 1972 | -13 |
| Shaw University | 39 | 1982 | - |
| Warren Wilson College | 51 | 1981 | - |
| Wingate College[a] | - | 1972 | - 5 |
| Brevard College | 68 | 1980 | - 4 |
| Chowan College | - | 1972 | -11 |
| Lees-McRae College | 10 | 1981 | - 4 |
| Louisburg College | 3 | 1981 | - 7 |
| Montreat-Anderson College | 24 | 1976 | -14 |
| Mount Olive College | 35 | 1980 | -12 |
| Peace College | 3 | 1976 | -14 |
| St. Mary's College | 4 | 1982 | - |

[a]Became a four-year college in 1977.

Source: Statistical Abstract of Higher Education in North Carolina, 1982-83.

Attachment A

The Classification of Institutions of Higher Education by the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education

1. Research Universities I. The 50 leading universities in terms of federal financial support of academic science provided they award at least 50 Ph.D.'s each year.

2. Research Universities II. The 100 leading universities in terms of federal financial support of academic science provided they award at least 50 Ph.D.'s each year.

3. Doctorate-Granting Universities I. These institutions award at least 40 Ph.D.'s in at least five fields per year or receive at least $3 million in total federal support each year.

4. Doctorate-Granting Universities II. These institutions award at least 20 Ph.D.'s without regard to field or 10 Ph.D.'s in at least three fields.

5. Comprehensive Universities and Colleges I. These institutions enroll at least 2,000 students and offer a liberal arts program and at least two professional programs.

6. Comprehensive Universities and Colleges II. These institutions enroll at least 1,500 students and offer a liberal arts program and at least one professional program.

7. Liberal Arts Colleges I. These colleges are highly selective in their admissions standards or are among the 200 leading baccalaureate-granting institutions in terms of numbers of their graduates later receiving Ph.D.'s.

8. Liberal Arts Colleges II. All liberal arts colleges which do not meet the Liberal Arts Colleges I requirements are included in this classification.

9. Two-Year Colleges.